

The plague years: a chronicle of AIDS, the epidemic of our time. By David Black, London, 1986. Picador/Pan Books. Pp 177. Price £3.50.

Mr Black is clever. This is clear despite the fact that the book is written in appalling American journalese. The jargon eventually has a strange appeal. Some words and phrases, such as "dry humps" (p52), reveal their meaning only in context. Nevertheless there is throughout an acute sense of social awareness in the author's observations of men and the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) scene in the United States of America. He has a sharp ear and eye for individuals, whether it be a voodoo priest in the slums of Haiti or the leader of the AIDS task force in his office at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. The same applies to the reporting of the fierce discussions concerning the proposed closing of bathhouses and the arguments for and against children with AIDS attending school. No nuance is neglected.

Omissions and mistakes are few. For example, the author does not explain if and how AIDS reached Haiti from Africa. Less forgivable however, is his statement (p177) that the plague ended in London with the removal of the Broad Street pump handle.

For all genitourinary physicians awaiting the arrival of AIDS in their area, this book will be useful. Once you have come to terms with your love/hate relationship with it and decided not to translate it, it is a good read.

R S Morton

Essentials of urology. Edited by Joseph N Corriere Jr, 1986. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh. Pp 332 and index, paperback, illustrated. Price not given.

This is an excellent book written primarily for medical students, residents, and those who are interested in urology. The book is very well written, and the subject matter embraces the whole range of urology includ-

ing recent advances in diagnosis and treatment. At the end of each chapter there is a comprehensive list of suggested further readings. The chapter on congenital abnormalities of the external genitalia is particularly good.

The book has only limited appeal to genitourinary physicians as there are only a few brief paragraphs devoted to sexually transmissible diseases. Nevertheless, I am delighted to note that the authors have made urologists aware of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and that patients with STDs may present to them. This awareness is particularly relevant in North America and other countries where STD is not a specialty in its own right.

This clearly written book should be particularly useful to junior staff in urology as it gives guidelines for investigations and reasons for them. I recommend it to all those starting the subject, and it will also interest undergraduates. I enjoyed reading the book.

R Basu Roy

Notices

Organisers of meetings who wish to insert notices should send details to the editor (address on the inside front cover) at least eight months before the date of the meeting or six months before the closing date for application.

Grand Orient de Belgique masonic lodge, Les Amis du Commerce et la Perseverance Reunis, 4th medical prize

In March 1987 the masonic lodge "Les Amis du Commerce et la Perseverance Reunis" in Antwerp will award its 4th medical prize of 30 000 ECU (£19 000).

The purpose of the prize is to reward a scientist or group of scientists who, in the course of their research work, have made a significant contribution to the progress of medical science whether theoretical or practical, fundamental or clinical. The prize may be divided between several candidates.

The prize will be awarded by jury of four members and a president appointed by the masonic lodge "Les Amis du Commerce et la Perseverance Reunis". The jury shall be entitled to call in experts for advice if it deems necessary. The members of the jury who will have been empanelled to attend the meetings will have to justify their judgment of the candidacies in writing. All deliberations will be made in camera and decisions made by a

simple majority. All working expenses will be paid by the organising lodge.

The competition is open to any researcher whether certified or not, without discrimination of a racial, national, sexual, or philosophical nature. Candidacies for the prize must be sponsored by at least two freemasons whose masonic qualifications must be confirmed by their masonic authorities. In turn the sponsors will have to vouch in writing for the moral integrity of their candidates.

All applications must be accompanied by a detailed curriculum vitae of the candidates, a résumé of their scientific activities, and the opinion of the authorities under whom they work. All applications must be submitted before 30 December 1986 and addressed to: Mr René De Zuttere, Hoogpadlaan 101, B-2070 Antwerp, Belgium.

The jury will come to a decision not later than 31 March 1987. This decision will be final and not open to appeal. The prize will be presented during an academic session in Antwerp in May 1987. The masonic lodge

"Les Amis du Commerce et la Perseverance Reunis" reserves the right to withhold the prize should the applications appear to be below standard.

European Society for Dermatological Research symposium on aging and skin cancer

A clinically oriented symposium on aging and skin cancer will be held at the Hotel Midas Palace, Rome, Italy, on 15-17 February 1987.

Enquiries should be addressed to: organising secretariat, European Society for Dermatological Research symposium, c/o PTS srl, Viale Bruno Buozzi 61, 00197 Rome, Italy. Tel: (06) 80 45 53. Telex: 621514 PTS-ROM I.

Scientific committee: F Serri, G Rabbiosi, D Cerimele, and A Giannetti, Foundation for Research in Dermatology, Largo Gemelli 8, 00168 Rome, Italy. Tel: (06) 33 85 451.